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Geospatial information for sustainable development

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Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to bring to the attention of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management the report prepared by the working group on geospatial information of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which will be made available in the language of submission only from the website of the Committee of Experts (http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/8th-Session/). The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the progress of the working group towards addressing the availability and application of geospatial information in the production of Sustainable Development Goal indicators and in measuring and monitoring the key principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to leave no one behind.

Summary of the report

At its seventh session, held in New York from 2 to 4 August 2017, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 7/109, in which it recognized that the combined geospatial and statistical expertise of the working group positioned it appropriately to facilitate and support a "data ecosystem" that leveraged an accessible, integrative and interoperable local-to-global information system for measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals and tracking annual progress. Also in decision 7/109, the Committee acknowledged that the global geospatial information environment was dynamic and innovative, with the emergence of new technologies, methods and processes, and, in that regard, agreed that data availability and quality remained one of the biggest challenges for Member States and that data, when available, must also be accessible, consistent and sustainable for the production of indicators to provide information on the agreed goals and targets, in accordance with national priorities and needs.

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In the report, the working group provides information on the progress made towards ensuring that the contribution of the global geospatial information community to the Sustainable Development Goal process remained rigorous and relevant. That includes a revised workplan for the biennium 2018–2019 that builds upon the working group's earlier efforts and outcomes, with a focus on developing and providing guidance on disaggregation by geographical location and on aggregation of geocoded unit-level data. The working group is seeking to develop and provide further guidance to the statistical community on appropriate approaches to leveraging production-ready satellite Earth observation time series data, contributed by space agencies participating in the working group. The report includes the main outcomes of the fourth meeting of the working group, held in New York in December 2017, and of subsequent online meetings.